Essential Skills and Technical Standards for the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MS-SLP) at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU)

The OBU MS-SLP program prepares students for entry-level clinical practice as speech-language pathologists (SLPs) across a variety of clinical settings. Admission to the program requires students to acknowledge understanding of essential skills and technical standards for the profession. These skills and standards are necessary for a student to successfully complete academic coursework and clinical requirements and to develop the competencies for effective clinical practice. All students must demonstrate essential skills and meet technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

The requirements outlined in this document were adapted from the Council of Academic Programs in Communications Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) "A Guide for Future Practitioners in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology: Core Functions" and align with the knowledge and skills required for professional practice as outlined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) in the SLP Scope of Practice and the SLP Certification Standards

Purpose

The essential skills and technical standards outlined in this document describe the core professional functions, abilities, and behaviors required to succeed academically and clinically in the program and the profession. Successful candidates must possess the physical, cognitive, communicative, behavioral, and social attributes necessary to meet the professional requirements of an SLP. The program is delivered in a hybrid format incorporating in-person, synchronous online, asynchronous online, and telepractice components so students must **demonstrate** the described **skills and standards** in both **in-person and virtual environments** across a **variety of clinical and academic settings with all individuals involved in the academic and clinical components** of the program (persons-served, family members, clinical educators, caregivers, professionals, instructors).

Essential Skills and Technical Standards

Communication

Students must:

- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and professionally in English in spoken, written, nonverbal, and digital formats.
- Use professional, clear, and timely communication in clinical documentation, academic coursework, and electronic communications.
- Possess adequate auditory perception to distinguish speech, language, and swallowing disorders and differences.
- Read and comprehend technical, academic, and clinical materials, including textbooks, journal articles, clinical documentation, and digital resources.
- Convey complex information clearly and concisely in oral, written, and electronic formats (e.g., patient reports, treatment plans, discussion boards, emails, telepractice, and clinical documentation).
- Effectively adapt communication style to individual needs and varied situations.

Motor and Sensory Skills

Students must:

- Demonstrate the necessary fine and gross motor skills to perform diagnostic procedures, therapy techniques, and clinical documentation tasks.
- Utilize clinical and educational technology, assessment and therapy materials, and electronic medical records.
- Demonstrate the ability to use electronic devices and clinical software efficiently, including typing, data entry, and electronic documentation.
- Have adequate visual acuity to read assessments, interpret nonverbal communication, and observe behavior.
- Possess sufficient hearing ability to differentiate speech sounds, vocal quality, and spoken language.
- Observe individuals and accurately document nonverbal communication, speech production, language comprehension, language production, and behavioral responses.
- Monitor and assess physical and behavioral responses to assessment and treatment and respond appropriately.
- Respond professionally to emergency situations.

Cognitive and Intellectual Abilities

Students must:

- Process and synthesize information from online lectures, discussion boards, clinical case studies, and professional literature.
- Demonstrate the ability to learn and engage through a variety of modalities.
- Synthesize and apply information from various sources in academic and clinical contexts.
- Demonstrate problem-solving and critical-thinking skills necessary for clinical reasoning and decision-making.
- Apply theoretical knowledge to virtual simulations, clinical cases, and clinical practicum experiences.
- Adapt and modify assessment and treatment approaches based on client performance and behaviors.
- Develop and implement effective assessment plans and intervention strategies.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Students must:

- Exhibit characteristics of professionalism including reliability, responsibility, integrity, empathy, and compassion.
- Maintain emotional and mental health required for full participation in academic and clinical activities.
- Demonstrate respect for the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all individuals.
- Accept, apply, and respond appropriately to constructive feedback from academic and clinical instructors.
- Work collaboratively with classmates, faculty, clinical educators, and other professionals.
- Display empathy, compassion, and sensitivity with all individuals.
- Demonstrate curiosity, self-discipline, time management, and independent learning.
- Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability when confronted with various technologies, changing schedules, and learning environments.
- Actively engage in all aspects of the program while maintaining professional etiquette.
- Cultivate appropriate professional relationships.

Professional and Ethical Conduct

Students must:
- Uphold ethical standards, legal regulations, and policies and procedures.
- Demonstrate cultural competence and respect for individuals and populations.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy of all individuals.
- Demonstrate punctuality, reliability, and accountability.
- Exhibit honesty and integrity in academic assignments, clinical documentation, telepractice services, and research activities.

Reasonable Accommodations

The program is committed to supporting students with documented disabilities by providing reasonable accommodations that enable them to meet these essential skills and technical standards across all program components without altering program requirements or jeopardizing client safety. Students seeking accommodations are encouraged to work with the Office of Disability Services upon admission or at any point during the program.

Conclusion

These essential skills and technical standards ensure that graduates are prepared to succeed in a variety of professional settings and service delivery models, including in-person and telepractice environments. Meeting these standards is a requirement for program admission, progression, and completion.